

Meredith & district News

DECEMBER 2024

OUR **FREE** COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

We wish all our readers a MERRY XMAS and a safe, relaxing summer.



inside

- Plan now for Rabbit Baiting.
- A Coms Tower in Wallace Street?
- Christmas Lights and Garden Comp is Back.

...and Much More!



it's
Summer!
and we've got
some tips inside.

e: news@meredithnews.com.au w: meredithnews.com.au



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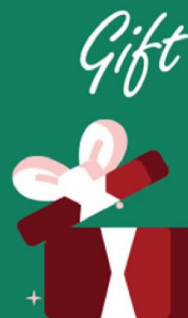
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For all enquires call or message
Brett - 0418 647 446
Daniel - 0417 392 985

& Meredith district News



The Meredith and District News is published by a volunteer sub-committee of the Meredith Community Centre comprising: Jim Elvey, (general editor and chair), Ian Penna, Sue Higgs, Nerida Anderson and Ian Leighton. Production is undertaken Peter Boer, Don Atherton, Marlene Johnson and Jim Elvey.

NEWS & VIEWS

Appropriate contributions accompanied by the contributor's name (which will also be published) and contact details, are most welcome. Please email to news@meredithnews.com.au or deliver to the Meredith Post Office or Meredith Hub

DATES AND DEADLINES

The Newsletter is distributed on the **first Thursday** of the month (except January). All ads and submissions must be lodged by 9.00 am on the **last Thursday** of the preceding month, but earlier is **really** appreciated.

ADVERTISING

Advertising in the M&D Newsletter is a great way to let district residents know about your business. Contact us for full details and lodgement forms. Rates, excluding GST, are as follows:

	B&W/Colour
Business Card	\$20.00
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Half page	\$50/\$110
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A \$20 loading applies for preferred position. Please submit in jpeg format, if available.

Classifieds are **FREE** for small, personal notices from residents. Otherwise \$7.50 on invoice or \$5.00 if paid on lodgement. Community Groups can have a 1/4 page ad for free or a \$30.00 discount on larger ads. (conditions apply)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

You can subscribe to get the Meredith and District News posted to you anywhere in Australia for what it costs us to send it - \$59.50p.a. (11 issues)

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WEB

You can read back copies and additional stories at meredithnews.com.au

ONLINE PHOTOS

We do not publish children's photos online. If you would like any other photo that you appear in withheld from the online edition, let us know in writing by the second Thursday of the month of publication.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the publishers. The publishers may edit or reject contributions and accept no responsibility for errors or omissions

Issue Production: *Peter Boer* Editor: *Jim Elvey*

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0419 248 660

B'BURN ART
GROUP
0410 808 483

BLUE LIGHT
DISCO
5286 1222

BOOK CLUB
5286 8201

CFA
000 for fire calls
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0419 767 982
Meredith
5286 1502
Morrisons
0417 770 765

CHILDCARE
5286 0700

COMMUNITY
CENTRE
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CRICKET
Elaine
0448 291074
Junior
(U16,U14,13)
0448 291074
Meredith
5286 1434

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SCOUTS
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0409 862 326

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SEWING GROUP
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0437 009 250

PLAYGROUP
5286 0700

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PADDOCKS
5286 1273

RSL - 5286 1452

SENIOR
CITIZENS
5286 8232

TENNIS
Elaine
0448 291 074
Lethbridge
52 817 321
Meredith
0424754179

SEW 'N' SEWS
5286 0700

FRIENDS OF THE
BRISBANE
RANGES
5286 1252

emergency

Police, Ambulance, Fire	000
(from mobile phone)	000 or 112
Meredith Police Station	5286 1222
Police non emergency	131 444
Power Failure	132 412
Nurse-On-Call	1300 606 024
Mental Health Advice	1300 280 737
Poisons Information	13 11 26
Barwon Water	1300 656 007
SES Emergency - flood & storm	132 500
24 Hour Helpline	1800 629 572
24 Hour Drug & Alcohol Counselling	1800 888 236
Kids Help Line	
24hr 5-18yo	1800 551 800
Golden Plains Shire	1300 363 036
a/h emergency	0408 508 635
Ranger	52207111
	or 0409 830 223
Bannockburn Vet	5281 1221
Golden Plains Animal	5281 2226
Pets and Horses 24/7	0421 617 238

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Mr Don Atherton. 0409 869 960

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SCHOOL

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RECREATION

RESERVE

0429 315 575

..start something.

If you have a special interest you would like to share with like minded people, let us know



"Summertime and the livin' is easy."

- Porgy and Bess

Church News



Meredith – St. Joseph @ 9am Sun. JAN. 12 & 11am on JAN. 26 AUST. DAY
 Bannockburn – St. Mary MacKillop @ 11am Sun. JAN. 5, 12, 19 & 9am on JAN. 26
 Inverleigh – Sacred Heart @ 4pm Sun. JAN. 19

Meredith Uniting Church

Services have recommenced. 11.00 am 2nd Sunday each month. Enquiries:

Rev. Paul Sanders 0407 833 515 5341 2440

Serbian Orthodox - 5341 5536

Daily services: Matins 8.00 am, Vespers 6.00 pm.

Divine Liturgies on Saturdays & Sundays 10.00 am.

Worship on Sundays in the Anglican Parish of Inverleigh+Bannockburn+Meredith:

8.00 am Holy Communion St Paul's, Inverleigh

10.00 am Family Communion. St John's, Bannockburn

5.00 pm Prayer and Praise Epiphany, Meredith

Find us at: www.goldenplainsanglican.org or

office.revdrtim@hotmail.com

The Revd Dr Timothy Smith

PiC Anglican Parish of

Inverleigh+Bannockburn+Meredith

Note our Service : Nine Lessons & Carols at 5.00pm on the 8th December at MEREDITH

St Josephs Parish of Meredith

CATHOLIC PARISH OF MEREDITH MASS TIMES –

Winchelsea - St. John the Baptist @ 6pm Sat. DEC. 7, 14, 21, 28

Anakie – St. Brigid @ 9am Sun. DEC. 8, 22

Meredith – St. Joseph @ 9am Sun. DEC. 1, 15, 29

Bannockburn – St. Mary MacKillop @ 11am Sun. DEC. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Inverleigh – Sacred Heart @ 4pm Sun. DEC. 15

CHRISTMAS TIMES

Reconciliation Services

Bannockburn: Tuesday 10th December, 9.00am

Meredith: Friday 13th December, 10.15am

Winchelsea: Saturday 7th December, 5.00pm

Mass Christmas Eve

Bannockburn: 6.00pm

Meredith: 9.00pm

Mass Christmas Day

Winchelsea: 9.00am

Anakie: 9.00am

Bannockburn: 11am

New Year's Day

Meredith: 11am Mary, Holy Mother of God

JANUARY 2025

Winchelsea - St. John the Baptist @ 6pm Sat. JAN. 4, 11, 18, 25

Anakie – St. Brigid @ 9am Sun. JAN. 5, 19



OUR COVER

The start of another hottie. Sunrise on the edge of town.

Photo by Jim Elvey.



Send us your fabulous photos - you could be front page news!



Classifieds

First insertion of small ads are FREE to district residents

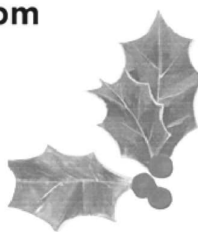
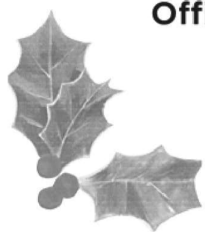
WANTED TO RENT - Young family looking to rent house and around 2 acres. Please contact Christina on 0490 945 007

AGISTMENT WANTED 22 Angus cows & Aut. calves Long-term preferred. Can BYO yards if needed Please call Amelia 0408 995 224

Merry Christmas 2024

Have a happy and safe holiday season

I'll be in our new office in January 2025 at
2/3 Peel Street South, Bakery Hill
I look forward to seeing you in the new year
Office hours will be 10am-4pm



Michaela Settle MP
Member for Eureka

📞 5331 7722

✉️ michaela.settle@parliament.vic.gov.au

📱 @MichaelaSettleMP



Meredith Community Centre
working for our community

What's On This Month



MERRY CHRISTMAS

WISHING YOU AND YOUR
FAMILIES A MAGNIFICENT
CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Our Office and the Meredith Mart will close on
Thursday December 19.
Please keep an eye on our Socials for Opening
Times over the Holidays

Mindfulness with Jade

Monday - 3.30 - Prep - Grade 4
Monday - 4.30 - Grade 5 - Year 9
Wednesdays - 9.30 - Goddess Mums
\$15 per session, payable by Term

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9-3 MONDAY-THURSDAY

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Tai Chi - \$15 per session

Tuesdays @ Meredith with Sandra - 9.15 - 10.15
Wednesdays @ Bannockburn with Desma - 9.30 - 10.30

Steady Feet @ Meredith - \$11 per session

ON HOLD - SEEKING AN INSTRUCTOR!



Join us on
Facebook & Instagram
@meredithcommunitycentre



PLAYGROUP

THURSDAYS
9.00am - 11.30am
\$2 per family

Community



AMA CONNECTIONS

ADVANCE MEREDITH ASSOCIATION

Kym Ivory, (President AMA)

Reflecting on the year since I became President, what I've learned in the process, is that the people in the association are so passionate about making Meredith a better, tidier, safer place. Your commitment to putting pressure on Local and state Govt representatives is outstanding, and the results are evident. I have certainly learned so much from all of you. I want to say a huge thanks to you for being that way, and pushing the envelope when it comes to the betterment of Meredith. I have loved working with you all on our 3 major events, namely, Christmas Carols and the BBQ, the Biggest Morning Tea, and our recent Trash and Treasure event. All were carried out in a professional, skilled and excellent manner.

Thanks to Bev and Kerrie for your expertise in the meetings with Phil and Vicky from the Golden Plains Shire. I am so grateful for your handling of these matters. It takes so much pressure off the rest of us. Thanks for the feedback and reporting of them too.

Thanks to the executive for your support through the year. Standing in for others, holding up the team, and just being awesome. Lastly, a huge thanks to all the underground team, that just hop in and help and then just disappear into the darkness or from wherever they came from, you are indispensable, and I thank you for being the ground crew that gets the plane off the tarmac.

Here's hoping that next year bears as much fruit in the community and even more than this one. Congratulations everyone...

PS Don't forget our Carols event on the 22nd December, and hopefully a twilight market beforehand. Carols will be between 7-8pm, twilight market from 5pm. Sausage sizzle & Santa too...

Look out for the Christmas lights competition...check out our Facebook page for details.

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Meredith Primary School 150th

Fairlie Pritchard

We are getting excited about our 150th celebration on Friday December 13th. The day will start with some formalities at 1.30pm. Afterwards, the school will be open for people to look through featuring a digital heritage display in the Bluestone building. From 5pm, we will be entertained by the Billy Tea Bush Band out on the front basketball court. We will have Luigi's Gelato and Kombi For a Cause Coffee on site and the Meredith Cricket Club will be running a BBQ for people to enjoy!

Meredith Primary School 150th T-Shirts

You may have seen a new addition to the Meredith PS uniform this term. To commemorate the 150th anniversary, we designed a t-shirt for students and staff to wear. On the front, the shirts pay homage to our handprints which are part of the Grade 6 end of year celebrations, the school values are listed on the sleeve and all staff and enrolled students from 2024 are listed on the back. The students have loved wearing them, and will be able to continue wearing them next year.



Charlie & Charlie modelling the 150th Tshirts



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Recreation



Meredith Tennis Club news

Bridget Dyer

Summer Saturday Competition

The Summer competition continues to go well with a high standard of tennis being played, and the kids having fun. We thank all our parents for their continued support in ensuring children arrive to tennis on time, umpire and help out at the club as needed. Parent support is critical to making everything run smoothly and the club is grateful for all the wonderful parents we have at our club. The last round of tennis for this year is 14th December 2024.

Spring Night Competition

Our Spring night competition finals were 28th November and the weather was perfect for finals night. We had quite a few rivalries in the semi and grand finals, with brothers playing against each other and cousins play each other. A big thank you, needs to be extended to our amazing volunteers that help every week to make this competition a success. Of course there are the usual suspects, Courtney Murray and David Fox who continue to work wonders in the kitchen and manage to turn a profit off \$10 meals, but also there are those people who help set up, serve and clean up each week. Thanks goes to Meg, Sheryl and Faye for all of your help this competition with all of the less glamorous jobs.

Tennis Australia Story

Further to Tennis Australia filming and putting together a grass roots feature story for the Tennis Australia's Newcombe Medal, Maddy Reynolds, Courtney Murray and Bridget Dyer were invited to attend the awards ceremony at the Crown Palladium Monday 9th December. No doubt they will take photos and post them to the Facebook page. So watch that space



XMAS CRACKERS

Who hides in a Christmas bakery?

A mince spy

What do Santa's helpers learn in school?

The elf-abet

How do snowmen shop online?

They use the winter-net!

What's green, prickly and flies through the air?

A holly-copter!

Why did the snowman go to the veg market?

To pick his nose.

What type of photos do elves take?

Elf-ies!



Coms Tower in Wallace Street?

from media release

Golden Plains Shire Council is seeking community feedback on a proposed lease for a 100-square metre site located at the northwest corner of the Council-owned works depot on Wallace Street, Meredith. The project is in the early stages and to begin detailed project planning, the private company needs to secure a lease for the land, located in the northwest corner of the works depot on Wallace Street, Meredith.

Feedback is welcome from Wednesday 27 November to 5pm, Wednesday 11 December 2024. Community members are invited to share their views on this initiative, with further information available online at goldenplains.vic.gov.au/ consultations and at Council's offices. Or contact Council's Economic Development team at enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7111.

8 Shire Road Projects for Possible Funding - have your say.

from media release

Golden Plains Shire Council has identified eight projects for possible funding from the Victorian Government's Safe Local Roads and Streets Program. They are in Bannockburn, Haddon, Smythesdale, Smythes Creek, Ross Creek and speed limit reduction in various locations

Council is inviting community feedback on these initiatives before submitting an application for funding through the Safe Local Roads and Streets Program in January 2025.

Find out more and complete the Have Your Say survey at goldenplains.vic.gov.au/consultations. Submissions are open from Thursday 21 November until 5pm, Thursday 12 December 2024.

New Golden Plains Council

The election of the Mayor completes the make-up of the new Council that will serve a four-year term:

- Mayor Cr Sarah Hayden (right)
- Cr Lachlan Glen
- Cr Des Phelan
- Cr Brett Cunningham
- Cr Emma Robbins
- Cr Helen Kirby
- Cr Owen Sharkey



ID Serrated Tussock

Serrated tussock has a fine leaf and will roll smoothly between the index finger and thumb, while native tussocks feel as though they have flat edges. The leaves also feel rough when you run your fingers downwards due to fine serrations.

The Victorian Serrated Task Working Party has developed an online video and information sheets to help landowners identify the unwanted grass, which can be found at serratedtussock.com.



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Landcare News

Maude Meredith and Districts
Landcare Group

Nerida Anderson

ANNUAL RABBIT BAITING PROGRAM FEBRUARY – MARCH 2025

You may have noticed that the rabbit population is building up again in our region. While they may look cute, the European rabbit is one of the most destructive environmental and agricultural animal pests in Australia. Rabbits not only damage gardens but pose a significant threat to biodiversity and agricultural production. Rabbits graze on native vegetation, crops and pastures, preventing seedlings from regenerating and reducing crop yields, while also competing for feed with livestock and native wildlife. Their indiscriminate browsing and digging reduces vegetation cover, undermines buildings and contributes to soil erosion and stream pollution.

Rabbit baiting in late summer early autumn is one tool to help reduce rabbit numbers. The Maude Meredith and Districts Landcare Group annual rabbit baiting program will again run in February – and March 2025. The baiting program uses Pindone-poisoned carrots. Pindone, an anticoagulant that reduces blood-clotting, is regarded as one of the most humane ways to control rabbits. The Pindone is mixed with fresh carrots and then spread in a trail on disturbed ground either manually or mechanically for three nights, spaced three days apart. As Pindone is a cumulative poison it is imperative that all three feeds are carried out on the carrot collection days. There is an effective antidote to Pindone which reduces the risk to non-target animals.

In 2025 baited carrots will be available for collection in Maude between 2–4 pm on Friday 28th February, Monday 3rd March and Thursday 6th March. Carrots can be ordered in quantities of 5kg, 10kg or 20kg.

Everyone is welcome to take part in the baiting program, however the poisoned carrots must be ordered by **Friday 21 February 2025**. More information about the program, as well as a link to the online order form is available on the Maude Meredith and Districts Facebook page.

For any queries, please contact Laura Hollingsworth: maudemeredithlandcare@gmail.com or Elaine Johns: Ph. 0418 173 730 or 52 819395. Further information about baiting and developing an effective rabbit control program is also available from the Victorian Rabbit Action Network: <https://vran.com.au/>

RABBIT CONTROL INFORMATION EVENING

Rabbit baiting is an important first step to control rabbits, but it is just the start. Find out more about controlling rabbits at the December Landcare meeting where our guest speaker will be Sophie Small. For the past 10 years Sophie has worked for Bellarine Landcare Group Rabbit Action Group. Sophie is on a mission to excite and motivate the community to be proactive in integrated rabbit control, which she says is not a simple task! Sophie has worked with landholders to develop integrated programs for

controlling rabbits. She has seen the benefits of controlling rabbits for the regeneration of native vegetation and the flourishing of agricultural enterprises. She is an advocate for smart and strategic action when tackling the wicked problem which is rabbits.

All welcome, 7:15 pm on Thursday 12 December at the Maude Recreation Hall.

A Local Wedding

On October 5th, 2024, local couple Maddy McColl and Brent Reynolds tied the knot at their property in Cargary, with the reception held at Maddy's parents' farm. Despite the rain and wind, the ceremony was lovely, featuring four bridesmaids, four groomsmen (all family and friends), and an impressive 13 flower children! Brent's grandfather, Cliffy, served as the ring bearer, and Brent's mother, Tina, read a touching passage.

The celebration continued with friends and family dancing the night away in a hay shed that had been beautifully converted for the event. Brent and his father also transformed an old silo into a stunning bar, adding a unique touch to the festivities.

Congratulations to the happy couple on their wonderful day!





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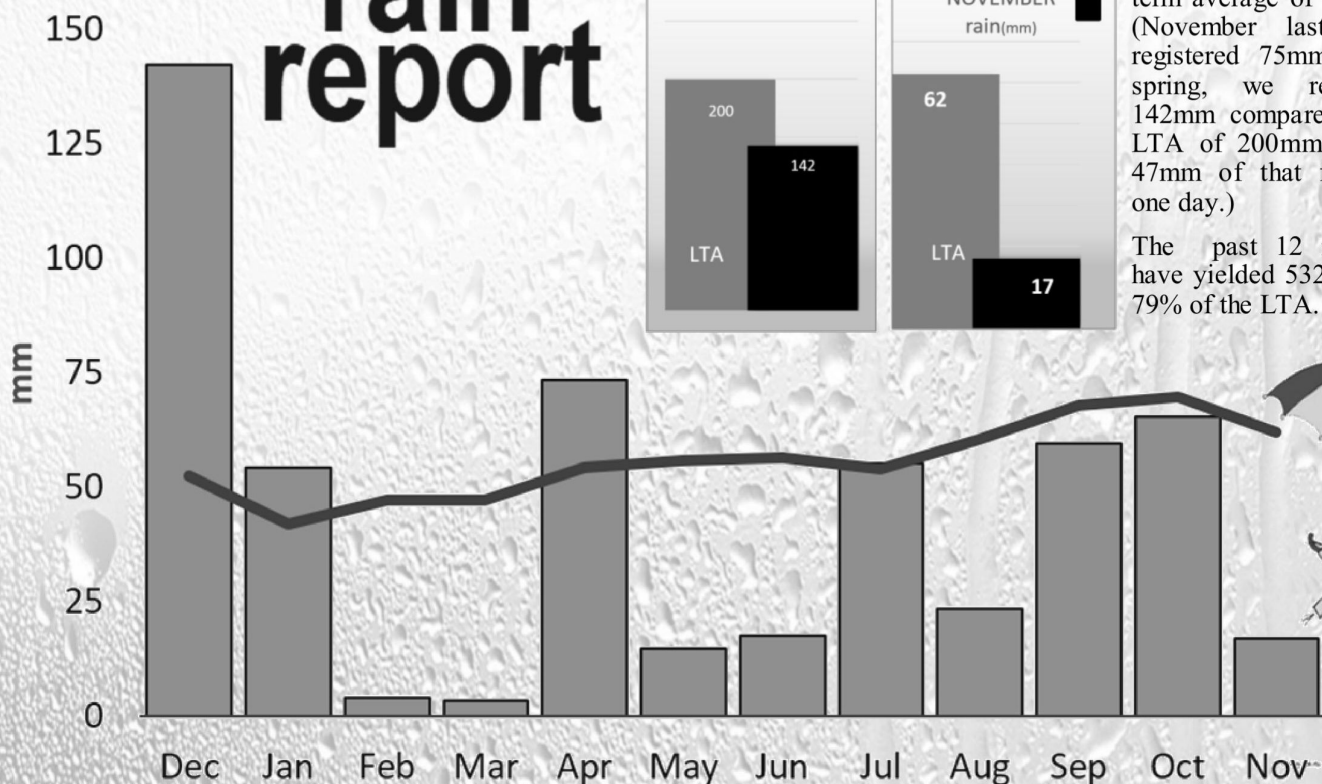
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the Spring rain report



Only 17mm was recorded in November* compared to a long term average of 62mm. (November last year registered 75mm.) For spring, we received 142mm compared to a LTA of 200mm. (And 47mm of that fell on one day.)

The past 12 months have yielded 532mm or 79% of the LTA.



* the local BOM site takes readings at 9.00am each day. Around 14mm of rain fell after that, on the 30th November, and will be attributed to December. (Which is a bit rough, given the rest of the month could only muster 17mm and it got nothing from its 15 hours of October!)

VALE – Kelvin Ashley Pitcher

– 25.11.1928 – 1.11.2024

Nerene Backhouse

“HOWDY”! That was how Kelvin greeted most people.

Kelvin was born in Beaufort to Bill and Doll Pitcher who were farming at Tatyoon at the time. Kelvin had 2 older sisters to dote on him – Phyllis age 5 and Glenis 4.

Sometime in that summer the family moved to Mingay but only stayed 3 years before moving – and settling – in Elaine, this time with another little girl – Netta aged 1 month - and Netta completed the family.

In his young days, both he and Netta were very good with horses and they went on many gymkhanas coming home with lots of ribbons. And the thing was, they had to ride to get there – no horse floats then. Kelvin loved horses – in fact, dogs and sheep too – but not cattle – and the family got the impression that he was sad when the tractor came on the scene because he would never talk much about losing the horses.

1942 was a bad drought year and with many of the local men away at the War, Kelvin had to leave school before the end of the year to cart water using a horse and fuphy tank. But the sheep would empty the trough by the time he came back with load after load. So, his father decided that was no good and went to Ballarat to buy a truck - if he could. That truck was part of an Army contingent from America bound for Burma. But when the news came through that Burma had been bombed, the ship was diverted to Sydney – and one of those trucks ended up in Elaine - it was a 6-cylinder Ford.

Kelvin was 14 at the time when he started driving and the word quickly got around the district that Pitchers had a truck, so he was kept busy.

Just about a month before his 17th birthday (you could get your licence at 17 during the War), he was heading out to the river at Morrisons. As he crossed the railway line, he saw the local copper from Meredith run out from the pub and flag him down. Dad thought “oh no, somebody's dobbed me in”, but when he stopped, Lloydly jumped up on the running board and asked if he was going to Meredith. No, he wasn't; “oh bugger ya,” Lloydly said, and went back to the pub! Phew! That was close!

So, a week after Kelvin's birthday, he had to go to Shelford, and thought he'd better do the right thing and call in to the Police Station and get his licence. “But I thought you had one” said Lloydly. Anyway, the necessities were done and off Kelvin went about his business. That licence is still current today – he never lost it.

Kelvin met Enid Garlick at a dance and they were married in 1952 – 3 children followed – Nerene, Rosilyn and Warrick.

For the next few years, life was pretty good – but then Kelvin was hit with a triple whammy – the 1967 fire followed by the 68 drought and then losing Enid in early 74. With cows still to milk, 80 acres of oats to come off, he just said “Life goes on”.

And so it did

He met Pearl Beilby a couple of years later and they had some great times for the next 8 years, before Pearl suffered a debilitating stroke – she lived another 17 years.

In early 2003, Pitchers left Elaine after 71 years and Kelvin moved to Ballarat. He resumed his love of dancing – this is where he met Betty Kirkpatrick. This was a very happy time for Kelvin, dancing about 2 or 3 times a week, and he and Betty had many wonderful holidays together before he lost her too just a few years ago.

Kelvin had a natural instinct for sheep farming from an early age – a 5th generation. He studied wool classing at the School of Mines in Ballarat and was widely known for presenting a good clip at the sales. When the sales people saw KP LANARK on a bale, they'd say, “Oh that'll be right – it's Kelvin's. We don't have to re-class that”. He also JUST KNEW the right time to buy or sell sheep. And a great part of that knowing involved the weather – which he followed right up to the morning he passed away.

He loved having his children with him when he was working so that he could teach them – but only one at a time – then there were no fights! And then he did the same thing with the grandchildren when they had a ‘holiday’ with Pa.

He was a cunning practical joker and you had to be on the lookout or you'd be next! When the grandkids came along, they soon learnt to watch out for Pa too! He took great joy in making fun of us.

In Elaine, Kelvin was very involved in a lot of what was going in the town, most notably the Fire Brigade. He was a founding member in September 1955 and served as 3rd Lt from 1976-1980 and President 1976-1984. He was awarded a CFA Life Membership in 1991 after 35 years, and became a Life Member of the Elaine Brigade in 1987. He completed 69 years as a member. He was the Brigade's oldest and longest serving member.

He was also awarded a Life Membership of the Elaine Mechanics Institute in 2006, having joined the Committee in 1960. He was Secretary from 1967 until 1976.

Kelvin joined the Meredith Lodge in 1969 and was a regular attendee at their monthly meetings - and was a Life Governor. He resigned in approximately 2013 because the Lodge had moved to Lara – too far to go to from Ballarat – and at night too. But he kept his Masonic connections in Ballarat by joining the Fidelity Club and was Vice President for about 17 years until it closed during covid.



As you can see, Kelvin had a great community giving spirit – he was always at any local working bees, whether it be the hall, the sports ground or the school or wherever he could lend a hand.

Family and friends alike always knew he had their backs. He couldn't say 'no' when somebody needed help whether it be financial or driving a tractor or working in a wool shed or babysitting dogs.

Far and wide, Kelvin was highly respected by all who knew him, whether it be family, neighbours, stock transport drivers, stock & station agents of all brands as well as auctioneers. He had a firm hand shake and that was his word – no one tried to dispute what Kelvin Pitcher said after that.

He was a great 'fix-it' person, learned mainly because it was too far to go to Ballarat for parts, so he 'invented' things out of what was in the shed to make something work again. He had excellent mathematical skills, and would build sheds etc without any plans – he knew in his head what was needed.

But it wasn't all work though - there were Euchre Nights in the hall on a regular basis – Kelvin was what was called a 'card sharp'. And he also played table tennis in the 60s which he really enjoyed. In Ballarat, he thoroughly enjoyed the monthly Morning Melodies at the Victoria Bowling Club. He came from a musical family, but he never had the opportunity to learn an instrument, but that didn't stop him from enjoying music – especially Andre Rieu.

Another of his pleasures was joining Nerene – and later Warrick and Wendy – on car runs. He would listen intently as people told the stories of their cars.

He really enjoyed socializing and was quite often the leader of the pack when it came to telling yarns. He was a popular resident at Mt Clear and something the staff would often say – even right to the end – that he never complained – he was very easy to look after.

His philosophy in life was "It'll be alright" or "Things will come out right".

In closing, we've been reflecting on what the legacy is that Kelvin has left behind – being a productive farmer contributing to the greater good – or was it his generosity of spirit or perhaps – simply - "everything'll work out right".



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Vale Clifford 'Cliffy' Hilton Niblett

Clifford 'Cliffy' Hilton Niblett, Born on April 27, 1945, in Gravesend, Kent, England. His life's path changed when, in 1957, his father William made the courageous decision to seek a brighter future in Australia. At just 11 years old, Cliffy, along with his family including his brother Robert (Deceased) and sister Susan embarked on the ocean liner Castel Felice. Together, they arrived in Australia, and Clifford began what would become a long and impactful life, full of love, connection, and community.

When the Niblett family first arrived in Australia. after staying at couple of houses around Geelong they settled in Beech Forest, where they took over the local general store. Cliff's love story with Brenda began on the dance floor in 1966 in Beech Forest. They quickly became inseparable, and by 1969 they were engaged, ready to begin a life together. Cliffy always referred to Brenda as 'the Pearl of the Otways'. Shortly after their wedding, their family began to grow with the arrival of their first child, Chris, followed by Tina and Jodie. They were happily married for 55 years.

Cliff was a devoted family man who cherished his loved ones deeply. His family was everything to him, and he took immense pride in each one of them. Cliff adored his 5 grandchildren Each grandchild brought their unique spark to Cliff's life, and his joy only deepened with the arrival of his 4 great-grandchildren.

Throughout his life, Cliff wore many hats and took on a variety of jobs, each with its own set of memories and stories. He was a bus driver and a truck driver, He then moved out to Warrambeen sheep station, as a farm hand. After a few years he got a job at Alcoa, Cliff loved sharing stories from those days, reflecting on how meaningful that job had been to him. Years later, it brought him immense pride to see two of his grandsons follow in his footsteps by completing their apprenticeships at Alcoa. Cliff finally found his calling working for the City of South Barwon, which then became the City of Greater Geelong, where he did aged and disabled modifications.

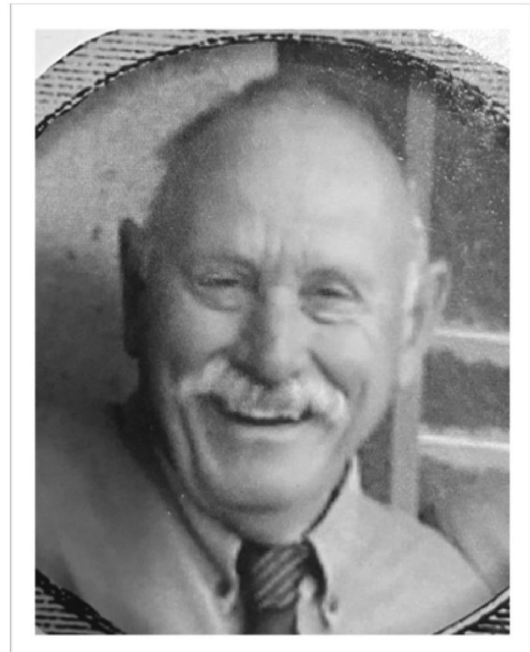
This role allowed him to combine his skills with a sense of purpose, and he took pride in the carpentry work he did to improve others' lives. His passion for building and creating was clear to anyone who visited his home in Meredith.

Retiring to Meredith in 2008 Cliff's home became his pride and joy, his own little "castle," constantly evolving with new renovations and additions he dreamed up, their home became a reflection of his love for carpentry. Cliff had a deep love for the outdoors, Whether it was hunting, fishing, or camping, he relished every chance to escape into nature. Cliff especially cherished trips away with his mates, his son Chris, and his grandsons.

Another passion close to Cliff's heart was AFL, and no team commanded his loyalty like his beloved Geelong Cats. It wasn't uncommon to see him yelling at the TV,

coaching from his couch as if he were right there on the sidelines. During especially nail-biting games, Cliff couldn't always sit still, he'd slip out to his car to check the live radio scores, pacing as he listened, in an effort to stay one step ahead of the delayed telecast. His dedication to the game went beyond being a fan, he also made a lasting impact as a coach, leading local teams such as East Belmont, St. Albans, and Modewarre.

Known far and wide in Meredith, Cliff was a man who brought warmth and friendship wherever he went. His presence was a constant at sporting clubs and community events; his jovial spirit and genuine kindness made him a friend to many and a pillar of his town. Cliff had the rare ability to make everyone feel welcome, to lift spirits, and to create memories with the people he met.



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Christmas Traditions

The Revd Dr Timothy Smith

"Oh my goodness! I can't believe it is nearly Christmas again!" so I have been hearing. I can imagine for some, in this time of raised cost of living, it is even more alarming. With this in mind, here are four types of traditions to start this season, which give meaning to the season, without adding to the cost-of-living burden.

The Giving Back Tradition

Donating our time by volunteering is a meaningful experience we can share with our partner or family. There are obvious benefits of doing something good for others. Volunteering together strengthens our connections, reinforces shared values, and helps re-centre on things that truly matter. Importantly, it is a hands-on way to model generosity for children if we have them. By the way, we need plenty of volunteers in our Inverleigh and Bannockburn Op Shops that serve our communities, so please contact us if you would like to be a volunteer in this way. Volunteering for a Christmas, community activity, or more regular availability is a great way to help us and our family build connected relationships.

The "Just for Us" Tradition

This time of year usually brings more social and work expectations than usual. Work end-of-year Christmas parties, neighbourhood gatherings, school events, family get-togethers, and gathering with various groups of friends, the list goes on. It may feel like our family relationships get neglected. Think about starting a new tradition making sure we are setting aside time for a date or holiday shopping; make a focus on family relationship time. Whatever we choose to do, make sure our connections stay strong during this hectic time.

The "Present over Presents" Tradition

Whether giving presents is important or less so in our families, one thing that can benefit most is traditions that are all about quality time, hanging out, and connecting. Maybe a family night, playing games, and where everyone shares what they are most thankful for during the year. The simple goal is for each of us being fully present with the others and enjoying each other's company.

The Tradition with a Twist

Christmas traditions are, for many of us, a big part of what make this season so special. They meld what we valued in the past with the changes of the present. Traditions often evolve because the family has grown, members move away, new relationships have inspired other traditions, not to mention those who are now gluten intolerant or vegans. Perhaps instead of a traditional round-robin gift exchange, adopt a Chris Kringle tradition, or purchase presents from a quality Op Shop. We don't have to start completely new traditions; just get creative with ways we can adapt them to meet the changing times.

Acknowledging that not all families get on well for Christmas and conversations to change what has been done in the past are difficult. However, traditions are a big part of the festive season, be open to the situation of other family members about what we can manage to do to meet the circumstances. Perhaps these new traditions may become ones we carry out and adapt in the years to come.

Based on <https://www.prepare-enrich.com/blog/4-traditions-to-start-this-holiday-season/>

BHUTAN

Bhutan is a small Buddhist kingdom on the slopes of the Himalayas with a population of 780,000. It has a history of self isolation to preserve its monarchy and culture from outside influences. It joined the United Nations in 1971 thus ending its political isolation and began allowing foreign visitors from 1974. It now earns significant income from tourism.

The postal history is most interesting. The first postage stamps were issued in 1962 which was the same year that the first drivable road opened in the country. An American entrepreneur named Burt Todd helped establish the postage stamp program. He was an advisor to the government and the royal family. The government established the stamp program to raise awareness of the country but also to raise funds to improve Bhutan's infrastructure, after the country was refused a loan from the World Bank.

He did not have a philatelic background but saw the opportunity to raise foreign exchange capital. Bhutan became famous for its unusual stamps of which very few were designed for internal postal use. This was particularly so with the use of materials other than paper for stamps.

And so sets of stamps were issued on gold coloured metal foil. In 1967 a set of space travel stamps was issued with a plastic coating which allowed 3D printing. This was a world first. Later 3D sets were issued showing butterflies, fish, insects and birds. In 1968 stamps commemorating Human Rights were issued being die-cast onto unused coins.

In 1969 stamps showing Buddhist Prayer Banners were printed on silk rayon. In 1973 stamps depicting roses were issued on perfume infused paper. In 1977 stamps were issued in the form of miniature vinyl records which could actually be played on a gramophone and had recordings of the National Anthem and folk songs. In 2008 Bhutan issued the world's first CD-ROM stamp commemorating the centenary of the monarchy. It could be played and showed tourist scenes and the history of Bhutan and the monarchy.

From 2009 tourists could visit the National Post Office in the capital Thimphu and for US\$4 could get a set of 12 valid Bhutan postage stamps showing a photo of themselves. This has been extremely popular with tourists and the Bhutan treasury but absolutely horrid for philatelists looking to complete their Bhutan collection!!



Vale to Veronica Mary Naylon

14/12/1942 – 20/10/2024

Marg Cooper

Veronica grew up in South Yarra in Melbourne, and because her father was a merchant seaman and was away for much of her growing up years, she often took on motherly duties with her three young brothers.

She attended St Josephs PS before heading to Star of the Sea Secondary School which she hated, lasting not a full year. She then attended Prahan Tech completing a typing and shorthand course.

Veronica loved footy, got reprimanded by a Nun at Star of the Sea for kicking a football back over the school fence to the workmen, started coaching her brother's team [which included Kevin Sheedy] when she was just fourteen years old, and would take them all on the tram to their matches. She supported Melbourne and in her young days considered it a mortal sin to miss going to a match.

Veronica loved the theatre and the arts, learnt ballet, tap, Irish dancing and calisthenics, performed in many plays and worked with JC Williamson's in the accounts department. She later became assistant Publicity Officer and met a lot of theatre stars who she worked with. Whilst she was at JC Williamsons the Australian Ballet formed, meaning that Veronica has essentially patronized the Australian Ballet Co since it formed, attending many performances.

Veronica married John Naylon on 9/11/1963, they lived in North Clayton and she continued to work at JC Williamson's until Catherine was born in 1966. On New Years Day in 1969 the family moved to a small farm at Lethbridge. She milked a cow and goat, raised chickens and poddy calves and then got a job as Kindergarten Assistant at Meredith and then as the first Coordinator of Meredith Community House.

Veronica was involved in many community groups that her daughter and four sons were involved in: she taught ballet in the local scout hall, taught RE at the local school, was part of a group who formed the Lethbridge Junior Football and many more groups.

After 25 years at Lethbridge Veronica and John became publicans at Spargo Creek Hotel in 1994 and then in 1999 went to the Bungaree Hotel. They later moved to Smythesdale and became entrenched in the Smythesdale community. Her last job was at the ACTU call centre which she loved. Politics and the union movement were a huge part of her life. She was even Miss Equal Pay in 1960 for the Seaman's Union.

Throughout her life Veronica was a loving and supportive mother, grandmother, daughter, sister and friend. She was accepting of all and a great fighter for social justice. She was funny, a great storyteller and rarely without a broad smile and chuckling laugh.

New Art Studio at Steiglitz

Our local art scene has just expanded a little with Ray Lukes' new studio at 320 South Steiglitz Road. Ray has had a long time interest in drawing, which has for him become a form of meditation. But now he has opened his new studio to the public. If you want to have a look, drop by or call him first on 0418 508057.

We wish Ray well in his new venture.



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A Life Story Worth Telling.

Marg Cooper

Recently two men visited the home of June and Neil Cameron to compile and transcribe June's life story. On the first visit they interviewed, on the second visit they checked that what they had transcribed was correct and on the third visit they presented June with a bound copy of her life story, that included photos that had been supplied by June.

The two men were Kim Henderson a retired barrister who, in his spare time, likes to ride hundreds of kilometres on bicycles around the state, and John McKay who is also retired and has a background in executive management and tertiary education. John is an award-winning history writer who has been actively involved in genealogical interests for over 45 years. John also teaches a Writing My Life Story short course at U3A in Geelong. Both have a long record of community service.

They volunteered to participate in this Barwon Health project because they wanted to do something worthwhile and meaningful. Socrates, in 399 BC, is attributed with saying "An unexamined life is not worth living" and both Kim and John would take that further and suggest that an unrecorded life is a terrible loss to family, friends and communities.

John said that *'We humans have always been story tellers and to some degree, that practice has been diminished in the busyness of life today. Think of all the knowledge, experience and wisdom that dies with someone when they pass.'*

We also like this project because it records people's own "voice". We don't sanitise it, make it sound puerile or exemplary. The best parts of someone's story are often the mistakes, misfortunes or blemishes we make along the journey. These stories are someone's look back over their

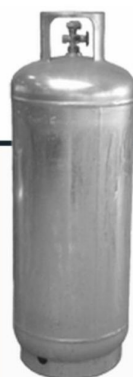
life with contemplative introspection, not to mention humour and self-deprecating honesty.

It is "their" story, told in their "voice" and serves as a reminder to their families and future generations that they came this way and did what they did for reasons and principles they valued at the time.

It is greatly rewarding for us to meet and spend time with these people, who in the closing chapter of their life, reflect and face the end with a degree of comfort knowing that their memories and experiences will survive them."

This project developed by Barwon Health is a highly valuable free service which ensures that a permanent record is kept of a patient's reflections, events and memories. I look forward to reading June's book as she has certainly got a life story that is worth telling.

The Barwon Health's Volunteer Co-ordinator is Annie Chatham: 03 4215 5700, 0409 540 166 or anne.chatham@barwonhealth.org.au. Alternatively you could contact John McKay on btb_pl@bigpond.com if you are interested in the program.



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HELP Proposal: Good or Bad Gift from the government.

It is almost Christmas and if you have a Higher Education Loan Program (HELP), it may seem that you are in for a gift from the government, as they are proposing that the existing debt be reduced by 20%.

Under these changes, an average HELP debt of \$27,600 will see it reduced by \$5,520 from their debt balance in 2025.

This debt reduction would be for the following people with current debts of the following kind:

HELP including the former Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS).

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Other income- contingent student support loan accounts.

Then the second change proposed is that you don't have to pay your debt of until you earn \$67,000. These changes would start July 2026. (Currently the threshold is \$54,435).

Plus, they are suggesting that not only do you pay the amount back when you earn a higher income but on top of this that you will pay back less, compared to the current percentage.

So for example if you earn \$70,000 currently under the proposed changes you will be paying back \$1,300 less, paying only \$450.

So is it a shiny present under the tree, the first part seems to be, I mean who doesn't want 20% shaved off their debt.

The second proposed change one would need to make careful planning around. You see, if the person with \$70,000 income only makes the minimum repayment via the employer compulsory amount, and then there is also the added indexation per year added back to the balance of the account, you may go backwards and never pay off that student loan or take a lot longer to pay off that debt then the current arrangement.

For example, the \$70,000 income earner with a HECS debt of \$22,080 would have taken 15.77 year to pay off the debt at \$1,750 minimum repayment with the current system. Now with the proposed change they will take 49.07 years on a minimum employer repayment of \$450. These figures are without adjusting for indexation or changes to the income.

So if you have a HELP debt and can take away anything from this article its this... enjoy the discount on your HELP debt and then put a plan in place that ensures you

pay off more than the minimum as soon as you can, taking into consideration all the other type of debt you may already have with higher interest rates, as they may want to be your priority.

Household savings hack of the month:

This month I have two... firstly my husband reminds me all the time to turn the lights off after I leave a room. I am a just in case person and tend to leave the light on "just in case I need to go back into the room soon after". The solution was sensors. We now have sensors in the main traffic areas like the hallways so we can save the electricity bill and my husbands sanity. Win Win.

Secondly, I have just started with my Poultry collection and have some chicks and ducklings from 1 week old. After trying so many online options for changing the brooder box bedding especially for the ducklings. I realise layering is the go. Place various layers on each side of the brooder box. On the side for the food and water I layer from bottom to top as follows:

Tray to cover the whole side of the food and water, Face washer inside the tray to absorb water, Cooling tray with holes evenly spaced to let water through, Nonslip shelf liner so that water seeps through it but is non slip for the poultry and finally the food and water. I have reduced the amount of time it takes to clean up after them and as I hose off each layer, by the time I need it the next day its nice and dry and ready to go. Saving me money on pine shavings and time.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and look forward to the New Year. Remember if you have any specific items you would like covered please send the team a message.

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NOTE Closed from 12.00pm 21st December. Reopening 9.00am 6th January 2025

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it's History

Meredith History Interest Group

Calendars:

The theme for the 2025 calendar is *Bridges of Meredith & District*. David Law was engaged to take photos of bridges with his drone, so most of the photos in the calendar show you the bridges from a completely different aspect to the one you usually see. We ventured out on four different days and David took photos from the Grand Junction Bridge to Sharps Bridge to Morrisons Bridge and all the bridges in between.

Calendars are available from the History Centre and at Woolabrai and the Farmgate Shop at Elaine and are still only \$15.00 each.

Morrisons Thru the Lens:

Morrisons people came out in force to launch the coffee table type book which contains over 200 photos of Morrisons. The book is similar in quality and size to the Steiglitz Book which MHIG launched in 2022. Tom Sullivan, Shire Councillor of the Moorabool Shire launched the book after Anne Miller spoke of growing up beside the Moorabool River and Pam Selman related memories of her grandmother Phyllis Douglas [Wells]. Graham Bayard talked of the hard work his forebears undertook to grow and get produce to market, Daryl Bayard added to that story and said that one year the Bayard brothers sold 100 ton of onions and realized £100. Nigel Parkinson, in an entertaining presentation, talked about when the Parkinsons came to Morrisons and, that

the last 4 generations have not moved far from the good farming land. [Sadly Pam Selman had covid but sent script to be read] The book is available from the History Centre at a cost of \$35.00.

Toilet Decoration:

Another toilet has been decorated at the Music Festival. For those who haven't been to the site on Mt Mercer/ Meredith Road, there are many banks of toilets to cater for the large crowds. By banks, I mean long buildings divided into maybe 40-50 cubicles. The Music Festival invite MHIG to decorate a toilet every year, and in past years some of the themes have been William Dunlop Johnson, Dinkum Dunnies of Meredith & District and Moorabool River and Morrisons. This year we wanted to tell the attendees a bit about where they are, and what surrounds them including the Leigh River, Lawaluk Mines and Grand Junction Bridge.

Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies:

Six decades ago, several historical societies in Western Victoria realized that if they co-operated with each other, many benefits would flow. Last year the WVAHS celebrated the 60th anniversary of the first meeting that was held at Horsham. Apparently, they hold two meetings a year and in 2024 the Annual Meeting was held in Nhill where they also inspected several historic sites including the old flour mill and the Holden Dealership building and its present contents. In recent years WVAHS has maintained 50 plus member societies. MHIG has been invited to join.

Out Foxed

Marg Cooper

Yvonne Broom {Grant} has always kept a menagerie of animals, including chooks. When she was young and living on the family farm in Coopers Road she also had a pet fox. She also rode a cow because she didn't have a horse and her dog pulled a cart containing rabbiting gear. But since living in Lethbridge township she has had many visits from Mr Fox and has developed a distaste for that sneaky animal. Last winter at about 11pm she heard her long haired Jack Russell dog, bark furiously. She quickly got out of bed and in her pyjamas and with bare feet she went out her front door and around to the side of the house where the dog had a fox bailed up behind a wheelbarrow that was leaning on the chimney. She wondered what she could use as a weapon and found a half brick that was half buried. At that moment her torch failed, but she hurled the brick and hoped.

The fox ran down through her garden with the little dog still snapping at the fox's backside, Yvonne tore through the house, in the front door and out the back door wondering what she could pick up to attack the fox with and remembered there was a hammer near the back door. She ran around the corner of the house over all sorts of different things and just as the fox poked his head out of the bushes, she gave him a decent crack on the head and he didn't get up.

Although Yvonne thinks he was an old fox with not many teeth in his head he had obviously been eating well as he had a good coat and bushy tail. Yvonne thinks he had a accomplice because on the same night another fox attacked a neighbour's ducks.

This amazing story is more amazing because Yvonne was 86 years old at the time!





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in our NATURE

Wendy Cook

The brush-tailed phascogale sniffed around the entrance of the nest box. It was early May, and she was looking for a safe place to rear her family. She preferred a natural tree hollow, but they were scarce. Most trees in the area had been cut down during the gold rush era, over one hundred years earlier. Their replacements were only beginning to form hollows. It takes all that time for fungi and insects to work away at the wood and form the spaces that animals and birds need for a secure sleeping place or family home. A few mature trees had been left but the hollows within them were in high demand, and the phascogale was unlikely to find space there.

This hollow seemed different. As the phascogale smelt the round entrance to the nest box, she encountered the familiar aroma of sugar gliders, but also something unknown, the smell of paint. She didn't know that this box and others like it had been placed in trees by people wishing to provide replacements for the hollows that were missing from the landscape. The phascogale poked her pointed face through the hole. Inside was a strong smell of eucalyptus. Sugar gliders had carried in gum leaves and formed a round nest in which several of them could curl up together and sleep through the day. The leaves were fresh, and its occupants would return in a few hours. She would have to look elsewhere.

The phascogale climbed nimbly up the tree trunk, her sharp claws digging into the tree's bark, her grey body about the size of a large rat. She had a dark stripe down the centre of her face, large round eyes, and a brush-like tail with black hairs sticking out on all sides, unlike the tail of any other animal. She stopped to lift a scrap of bark under which a beetle was hiding. She quickly crunched it with her sharp teeth. She liked eating insects, spiders and occasionally small animals, but also nectar.

As she hunted, she made her way along branches which formed a connecting pathway from tree to tree. As much as possible, she stayed hidden in foliage to avoid detection by one of her main predators, owls. Several trees away from the sugar gliders' home, she found another nest box. Her nose informed her that it had been inspected by parrots and even a tiny feathertail glider, but that no animal was living inside. She entered and found grooves cut into the inner surface of the wood, forming a simple ladder. The entrance hole was small enough to keep out predators and there was plenty of room inside, but it lacked the insulation of a natural hollow and would not keep her family warm on a cold night. For the first month and a half of their lives, she would have between five and eight tiny babies in her pouch each attached to a teat. After that, they would be big enough to remain in a bark nest while she searched for food. She would visit them during the night to feed them and keep them warm, but a phascogale and her young cannot generate as much heat as a large family of mature sugar gliders. She needed to continue her search.

She descended to the ground to find spiders and beetles among the leaf litter, then climbed a mature swamp gum, attracted by the honey-scented flowers. She enjoyed her

sweet meal in the outer branches, close to two ringtail possums. Their two youngsters were already growing well, and were tucked away nearby in a drey, a round nest of twigs, leaves and bark in a tree fork. Although they could use a hollow if it was available, they were not dependent on one. As the phascogale climbed back down the tree, she sniffed at hollows. The entrance to the first was too wide to keep her safe and smelt of brushtail possum. The next contained the scent of gum flowers and was nearly filled with old honeycomb left behind by a swarm of feral bees. It mostly blocked the entrance but there was a space large enough to enter. Her nose told her that another phascogale had already found this retreat.

Back on the ground, she weaved her way among the younger trees, keeping a nose out for tasty morsels. Some of these trees had three or four slender trunks growing from an older base. The original trunk had been cut for timber then sprouted new growth. As she passed one, she caught the scent of decaying wood. Following her nose, she found a narrow crack in the base of the trunk. She squeezed through it. It was too close to the ground for a bird or a possum to want to enter, and no feral cat or fox could follow her through that small gap and catch her or her young. Inside was a large space, such as phascogales prefer, with a dry floor covered in crumbled wood. She explored it thoroughly, munched a few of the beetles living there, and found it to be warm and free of drafts. She peeked out of the entrance, nose sniffing for predators. It was safe, so she climbed a neighbouring stringybark tree. She tore strips of fibrous bark from its trunk, and began carrying them back through the hole in the tree base. With care, she constructed a cosy bark nest. Contentedly, she settled into her new home.



Advance Meredith Association Inc

Christmas Lights and/or Christmas Garden Decoration Competition



Residential and Business/Community

Register Mary 0424 037 542

Name, Address & Category

Eg: Garden. Residential
Lights. Business

Judging Thursday 19th December

Winners announced at
Festive Community Celebrations



Vale to Jean Dunstan

1937-24/11/ 2024

Marg Cooper

Jean grew up in Geelong, went to Matthew Flinders Secondary School and was very involved in Girl Guides and Youth Groups in the Methodist Church in her young years.

She went to New Zealand in 1960, on a working holiday, married Max Dunstan [a Victorian who had pursued her to New Zealand], stayed there for 30 years and reared a family of 3 children.

Jean and Max came to Meredith in April 1991 and soon became very involved in the community. Jean played the organ at the Uniting Church and she was on the Church Committee and on the Community House Committee. Jean and Lucy Koostra saved its life in the 1990's. She typed and collated the Newsletter, and she took an interest in Guides, through formation of a Trefoil Guild. Jean did upholstery work and created craft items to sell at markets.

Among her many roles she was Secretary of the *Meredith Town Team* for many years. Nothing was too much trouble for her and she had an extraordinary ability to learn new skills e.g. computers.

She kept the minutes of the meetings, recorded work done by the Town Team, looked after the financial affairs of the Town Team, produced leaflets, flyers for advertising, produced the local phone book, cards and placemats to sell, produced the Welcome to Meredith booklet to inform new residents of who was who in the town, wrote concise letters for the Town Team, liaised with Shire council, sign writers etc and was always a keen contestant in the *Tidy Towns Competition*, attending awards, creating presentations and doing most of what was involved, including organizing working bees to tidy the town.

Jean and Max moved to Casterton in October 2005 where she tended her garden, did her craft work and kept in touch with their grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Jean Dunstan was a significant woman of Meredith.

Her generosity of time and skills to organizations was unbelievable.



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We are delighted to welcome to our pages, Jess Grinter and her seven year old son, Asher. They plan to produce a puzzle for us every month, so look out for it when we start up in February next year. And have fun with the puzzle - Ed.



Birds of Meredith

Can you spot a few of the birds you can find around Meredith in the word search below?



an ORIGINAL PUZZLE by JESS and ASHER

K	C	R	E	T	A	E	Y	E	N	O	H
L	O	G	E	I	P	G	A	M	E	N	B
S	C	O	X	P	F	F	L	F	S	O	W
T	K	R	K	E	L	B	L	A	K	I	T
M	A	Z	J	A	O	A	E	I	D	S	B
U	T	Y	M	G	B	X	S	R	O	Y	I
E	O	V	A	L	Y	U	O	Y	K	M	S
A	O	N	G	E	I	Q	R	W	C	I	D
W	A	T	T	L	E	B	I	R	D	N	P
H	T	H	W	Z	V	C	I	E	A	E	J
H	A	L	A	G	U	N	U	N	R	R	Q
S	H	R	I	K	E	T	H	R	U	S	H

KOOKABURRA

GALAH

FAIRY WREN

SHRIKE THRUSH

WATTLE BIRD

NOISY MINER

MAGPIE

ROSELLA

LOCKATOO

IBIS

HONEY EATER



The Beekeeper of Aleppo by Christy Lefteri

This book is a work of fiction based on the author's experience working as a volunteer at a refuge centre in Athens. She wanted to give voice to the people who had fled the war in Syria. She wants to tell their side of the story, why they risked their lives on perilous journeys and why they tried to reach England. In this book the author gives us a deeply researched, intimate look at the lives of one couple.

The story follows Nuri Ibrahim and his wife Afra as they escape the war-torn landscape of their homeland Aleppo, seeking safety and security. The book opens with Nuri, a Syrian beekeeper telling the reader to see his wife Afra. She has turned blind. Their house has been bombed and their son has been killed.

For Nuri bees become a symbol of hope. In Syria he chose to help his Uncle with his large number of hives rather than pursue a career that his parents wanted him to. His Uncle managed to get to England before Nuri and his wife, and he wrote emails to Nuri telling him to come as he had established bee hives, and wanted his help. And in the garden when they arrive in England is a damaged bee hive that Nuri tenderly looks after.

Afra and Nuri's journey begins in Istanbul before they risk a boat crossing to Greece. The book introduces the reader to the grit, willpower and determination that anyone would need to survive the hardships that refugees endure, including living conditions, travelling conditions and uncaring officials. Luckily Nuri has a good amount of money which provides them with more privilege than others and makes their journey just a little bit easier, and there are some people along the way who help and care

The displacement Nuri feels is apparent in the structure of the novel, as the narrative moves between current England, their journey to that point and their life in Aleppo before the war. The past and present merge into a patchwork of pain, loss and hope. But throughout the book Nuri lovingly looks after his wife who has been blinded by a bomb and trauma.

The ending is described as bittersweet. Whilst they arrive to safety in England they lament leaving the home and country they loved and one wonders if they will be granted asylum and be able to adjust to the new country and be accepted in the new country.

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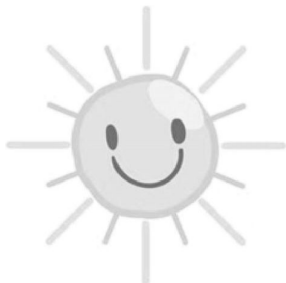


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G'Day from the penners for the last time in 2024. And as always, hasn't the year flown by! We hope you have enjoyed our stories over the last year. We have certainly enjoyed bringing them to you. If you would like to comment on any of our stories please get in touch, or if you think you would like to join us, our email address is goldenpens4@gmail.com

We hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and we look forward to February 2025 when we can entertain you all again. This last story is from Gail Griffin, enjoy.

Regards, Wendy.

Time's Up!

Mrs Plant's driving accidents were legendary in the small country town. Many landmarks, bollards and buildings bore permanent reminders of her poorly-executed attempts at navigating designated parking spaces.

The incident that was recounted time and time again over the years was the one when Mrs Plant indicated that she was going to park, nose in, outside the hardware store. Frantic owner, Bill Preston, yelled out, 'Everyone! Go to the back of the shop! Now!'

Puzzled, staff and shoppers nevertheless obeyed, just as Mrs Plant's car mounted the sixty-centimetre high flood kerbing and launched itself into the shopfront's bay window. The resultant noise was deafening. Nearby shoppers and shopkeepers rushed over to view the carnage.

'Just as well there was no one in the front of the shop,' declared a shaken Mrs Plant, as she rolled herself out of her car, stepped over broken glass and splintered wooden window trimmings. 'Can someone help me here, please?'

Not a soul stepped up. They were having crises of their own, thinking that they'd just escaped being run down inside a shop.

'Can someone call the police?' asked one distressed shopper but their voice was lost in the ensuing mayhem.

'Oh dear. There is a lot of damage,' said Mrs Plant, surveying the scene.

'Look what you did to my shop!' shouted Bill Preston.

'More to the point, Bill, look what your shop did to my Kingswood! I'll have to be without my car for another couple of weeks while Jim gets it back into shape. Call him now, please. He'll have to tow it away.' And, without further ado, she straightened up, smoothed down her clothing and waltzed away from the damage she'd caused.

Arriving back at home later that afternoon, Mrs Plant and Brian were met by George, the local police officer. Bewildered and frowning, Brian looked to his wife, who said, 'I...I...I was going to tell you when we came home...'

'Not again!' moaned Brian.

'Indeed, Brian. Not again,' agreed George. 'Another crash. Another infringement. Another fine for you, Mrs Plant and a long, protracted insurance claim for Bill Preston. Twice now, you've damaged his shop. Poor bugger. He lost all his hardware that he had displayed on the shop veranda. This has got to stop!'

'What has got to stop?'

'You! Driving!'

'Me? Stop driving? You can't be serious. I need my car.'

'And I need to ensure the safety of our community. Right now, you're going to undergo a driving assessment.' With an outstretched hand, George said, 'Brian. Your car keys, please.'

But Brian refused to hand over his car keys to George.

'Sorry, George. I respect you're a police officer but not my car,' said Brian.

'Well, if that doesn't speak volumes.' Turning to face an embarrassed Mrs Plant, George said, 'You are hereby forbidden to drive your car until such time as you report to the police station and undergo a driving assessment.' And with that he left.

Keen to get the assessment over and done with, Mrs Plant sat impatiently in the passenger side of Brian's car, the following morning, waiting, while Brian locked up the house. Becoming impatient, she fished into her handbag, found her spare set of car keys, crept out the passenger side, walked round to the driver's side and sat behind the wheel. Starting the car up, she quickly put it into reverse, just as Brian ran out the front door.

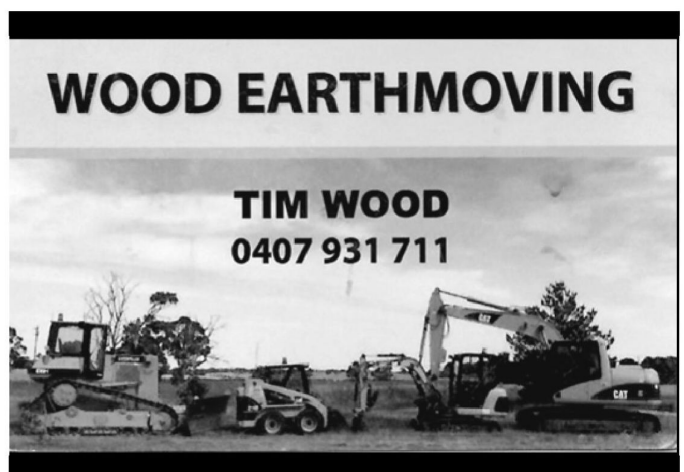
'Stop! Precious!' he yelled, but it was too late.

Panicking and unable to react quickly enough, Mrs Plant had backed over her prized fourteen-year old cat, Precious. She exited the car and scooped up the lifeless pet off the driveway.

'Bring her around the back,' sighed Brian. 'She's losing too much blood to take her through the house.'

Sobbing inconsolably, carrying Precious, Mrs Plant vowed she'd never drive again.

'Too right. Your time's up,' said Brian.





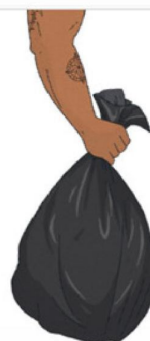
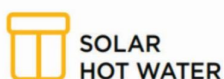
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2.00pm – 4.00pm: School open to the community with historical displays in the original Bluestone building.

5.00pm – 7.00pm: Community Bush Dance with the Billy Tea Bush Band. Food trucks will be onsite and a BBQ will be running.

We hope to see you all there!